

Fairer Paid Parental Leave Bill 2015 submission

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Fairer Paid Parental Leave Bill 2015. I would like to keep my personal details anonymous, although this submission can be published if desired.

As a mother of two young children, I would like to express gratefulness that I was able to access the Paid Parental Leave (PPL) entitlement as it currently exists and would like to see this scheme continue for future mothers.

The extra income derived from the PPL scheme allowed me to stay at home longer with both children. This, in turn, allowed me to continue breastfeeding them for a longer duration than I would have otherwise been able to without the assistance of the PPL scheme. For my first child, it meant that I was able to breastfeed him until he self-weaned at around 9 months old and I am currently still breastfeeding my second child at 8 months old. Being able to stay home longer further helped to foster a stronger mother – child relationship at an early age which would not have been possible if I had to return back to work earlier.

Even though we are a dual income household, my partner's income is almost entirely devoted to paying the mortgage on the house and my income is generally used for day-to-day living expenses. Without the PPL scheme, finances for our household would have been much tighter and I would not have had the opportunity to stay at home for as long as I did. Rather, I would have had to return to work soon after my employer's paid maternity leave ran out to make ends meet.

For both my children, I elected to take the 14 week paid maternity leave at a half pay rate. This, combined with the 18 week entitlement under the PPL scheme meant that our family had income for a period of 46 weeks to cover basic household necessities such as food, bills and nappies. The extra income from the PPL scheme is not generous enough to afford luxuries, but with careful budgeting and some existing savings, was sufficient to cover the significant cost of raising a family whilst on maternity leave.

I hope that my example has shed some light on how much the PPL assistance has helped our family whilst I was on maternity leave. I would be grateful if the Australian Government reconsidered the proposed changes to the PPL scheme. I am sure that by retaining it, it will be as beneficial to future mothers as it was to me.